

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-12. (Canceled)

13. (New) A drive mechanism, comprising:

a hydraulic force transmitting element having a primary unit and a secondary unit that are executed with differential pistons whose large effective surfaces jointly define a cylinder chamber, and whose small effective surfaces each define one annular chamber, the annular chambers being in hydraulic communication with each other, and including a spindle drive for driving the primary piston, the secondary piston indirectly or directly acting on a workpiece to be attacked; and

pre-tensioning means for subjecting the cylinder chamber to a pre-tensioning pressure;

wherein the two annular chambers are in hydraulic communication with each other via a pressure line, with an adjusting valve for controlling this hydraulic connection open and closed being arranged in the pressure line, and the cylinder chamber is in hydraulic communication with the annular chamber of the primary unit; and further comprising

a displacement valve for controlling the hydraulic connection open or closed..

14. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 13, wherein the pre-tensioning means may be activated and deactivated through the intermediary of a pre-tensioning valve.

15. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 13, wherein the drive mechanism is for a blanking and nibbling machine.

16. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 13, further comprising a path and/or pressure measuring system for detecting a relative position of the primary and secondary pistons and/or for detecting a pressure in the cylinder chamber.

17. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 13, wherein the pre-tensioning means is a hydraulic accumulator or a pump.

18. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 13, further comprising a feed pump for supplying the hydraulic accumulator, which is adapted to be driven by the secondary piston.

19. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 18, wherein a pressure at the secondary piston acts via a spring on a plunger piston of the feed pump.

20. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 13, wherein several spindles are arranged in parallel.

21. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 13, wherein the cylinder housing of the primary unit is encompassed by the cylinder housing of the secondary unit.

22. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 21, wherein an end portion of the cylinder housing of the primary unit plunges into a recess of the secondary piston.

23. (New) The drive mechanism in accordance with claim 13, wherein the pressure medium is water.